

American Third Army at Dijon. The American, British, and French forces were then reorganized in liberated France for a précipitous assault on Germany.

Dec. 16-25. BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

The German supreme commander in the west, Gen. Karl von Rundstedt, under orders from Adolf Hitler, dislocated Allied preparations by a sudden drive against thinly held American lines in the Belgian and Luxemburg sector. Suffering heavy

losses, the Allied forces were driven back to the Meuse. But they rallied to attack strongly on both sides of the "bulge" and the Germans were checked before the close of December.

With the opening of 1945, the American, British, and French drives into Germany from the west, coordinated with the rapid and powerful Russian thrusts from the Danube Valley, Poland, and East Prussia, fused into one vast combined operation.

13. THE BATTLE OF GERMANY, 1945

THE RÔLE OF AIR POWER. In twentieth-century warfare the assembly line has become as important as the battle line and consequently an equally vital target for attack. The strategy of blockade adopted by the Allied governments was designed primarily to starve, not the German population, but German industrial and military machines, chiefly by cutting off fuel and essential raw material. This aim could best be achieved by supplementing the naval blockade with a systematic bombing of German factories, power plants, and transportation centers.

At the commencement of the Second World War, in 1939, the Germans possessed the strongest air force in the world. By the close of 1943, however, their bombing squadrons were depleted, though they still had a peak force of 3000 first-line fighters. In 1944 the Allied air offensive was sharply intensified and German air strength declined decisively. Over 1000 *Luftwaffe* planes were destroyed in January and February and vital machine plants in Essen and Schweinfurt were crippled. Gen. Henry H. Arnold, commanding general of the United States Army Air Forces, later characterized the week of Feb. 20-26, 1944, as "probably the most decisive of the war" because of the shattering damage inflicted upon German installations in six days of favorable flying weather. By the end of hostilities the Germans had received 315 tons of explosive in retaliation for every ton of aerial bombs they had launched against Britain. Their loss in planes, by Jan. 1, 1945, had passed 50,000, in comparison with a total loss of 17,790 suffered by the United States Air Forces on all fronts. During the last four months of fighting, Allied air squadrons roamed Germany almost at will, destroying communications, obliterating plants and stores, and wrecking many of the remaining German aircraft on the ground, where they lay helpless for lack of fuel and repairs.

1945. The military collapse of Germany was consummated in four months by simultaneous drives launched by Russian armies in the east and south and American, French, and British Imperial forces in the west.

Jan. 12. Opening a powerful drive into Poland, the Russians took Warsaw (Jan. 17), swept into Tarnow, Cracow, and Lodz two days later (Jan. 19), and forced the Germans to abandon the whole Vistula defense line. By Feb. 20, Russian mechanized units, spearheads of an encroaching Soviet host that numbered 215 divisions, were within 30 miles of Berlin.

Feb. 7. Yalta Conference. While President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Marshal Stalin met at Yalta in the Crimea, to plan the final defeat and occupation of Germany (p. 1143), the United States Third Army crossed the German frontier at ten points. British and Canadian divisions opened an offensive south-east of Nijmegen (Feb. 8).

Feb. 22. The Third Army continued its progress, crossing the Saar River. American advance forces drove into the Ruhr Valley (Feb. 23) and entered Trier (Mar. 2) and Cologne (Mar. 5). Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces announced that the total of German prisoners taken since D-Day (June 6, 1944) amounted to 954,377.

Mar. 8. The United States First Army crossed the Rhine at Remagen, and the German defense system on the east bank collapsed. By Apr. 12 the United States Ninth Army had reached the Elbe River; eight days later the Russians fought their way into Berlin (Apr. 20); and advance units of the American and Russian armies met on the Elbe at Torgau (Apr. 20).

Apr. 29. German resistance in northern Italy broke as American and British forces swept into the Po Valley. The Fascist Republican régime disinte-

grated, and Benito Mussolini, attempting to escape to Switzerland, was captured and shot by Italian Anti-Fascist partisans. The German divisions in Italy surrendered unconditionally.

May 1. BATTLE OF BERLIN. Russian forces continued to shell Berlin and fight their way into the capital. A German radio announcement from Hamburg declared that Adolf Hitler had died defending the Reichschancellery, and that Admiral Doenitz had succeeded him.

One million German and Italian soldiers in Italy and Austria laid down their arms.

May 4. The dissolution of the German National Socialist régime continued, with local military commanders making their own offers of capitulation. German divisions in northwestern Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark surrendered.

May 7. A group of German army leaders sent envoys to Reims, where they signed terms of surrender.

May 8. President Truman for the

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United States and Prime Minister Churchill for Great Britain proclaimed the end of the war in Europe (V-E Day).

May 9. Marshal Stalin announced the end of the war to the Russian people. German army chiefs completed the formula of surrender in Berlin.

May 9-23. While German armed forces were being disarmed, the Allied governments transmitted orders through a provisional German government headed by Admiral Karl Doenitz. After two weeks this provisional régime was superseded. Doenitz, with several colleagues, and members of the German High Command and the General Staff, were taken into custody.

June 5. An Allied Control Committee, including Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, and Marshal Gregory K. Zhukov, assumed full control throughout Germany. German territory, as of Dec. 31, 1937, was delimited in four zones of occupation under American, British, Russian, and French military administration.

14. THE WAR IN ASIA

1939. Economic penetration and military intervention enabled the Japanese to bring a widening area of China under their control after 1931, and especially after 1937. By the capture of Hankow in 1939, they forced the Chinese Nationalists to establish a new capital at Chungking (p. 1122). At the same time, the outbreak of war in Europe compelled the British, French, and Russian governments to concentrate their forces in that quarter, and left the United States the only Great Power in a position to oppose Japanese expansion.

Dec. 31. Russia and Japan reached an accord concerning the renewal of fishing rights and the settlement of debt claims between Russia and Manchukuo.

1940, Jan. 14. Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai formed a new Japanese cabinet.

Jan. 26. The Trade Treaty between the United States and Japan, first negotiated in 1911, expired. The State Department informed the Japanese government that commercial arrangements would continue on a day-to-day basis.

Mar. 30. The Japanese supported the establishment of a puppet government under Wang Ching-wei at Nanking to administer the areas of China under their control.

Apr. 17. Secretary of State Cordell Hull warned the Japanese that the United States would oppose any attempt to change the *status quo* of the Netherlands East Indies by other than peaceful means.

June 9. Russia and Japan reached an accord regarding the disputed frontier of Manchukuo.

June 25. With the collapse of France under the German invasion, the Japanese demanded the right to land forces in French Indo-China. Japanese warships arrived at several ports there.

July 16. Prince Fumumaro Konoye became Japanese premier with a mandate to organize the government on totalitarian lines.

July 18. The British government closed the Burma Road. This was the main route by which the Chinese Nationalist armies under Gen. Chiang K'ai-shek could obtain foreign war material. The Japanese agreed to discuss peace terms with the Chinese Nationalist government.

Aug. 9. British garrisons at Shanghai and in northern China were withdrawn.

Sept. 4. Secretary of State Hull warned the Japanese government that ag-